

In summary, a distributed architecture enterprise portal as described above gives business executives and managers the responsibility and power to plan and build smaller departmental portals that satisfy their unique needs and requirements sooner rather than later. These departmental portals can still participate in a larger, networked, implementation of a true enterprise portal. The end result is incremental investment, faster deployment, and a greater return on investment. This model reduces the time and consensus building required in the planning stages. With departmental control and leadership from the organizational IT group, planning and budgeting issues are more manageable, the purpose and expectations of the portal are more clearly defined, and the portal strategy is seen by department level executives as having clear, tangible benefits for their short and long term needs.

Although the invention has been described herein in conjunction with the appended drawings, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the scope of the invention is not so limited. Modifications in the selection, design, and arrangement of the various components and steps discussed herein may be made without departing from the scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An enterprise portal architecture comprising:  
a plurality of user systems connected, over a network, to at least two portals;  
a plurality of data sources coupled over a network to said portals;  
said portals including a knowledge framework unit, said knowledge framework unit including a digital business identity and a knowledge broker, wherein said digital business identity includes a user directory configured to store information unique to a subset of said plurality of users, and wherein said knowledge broker includes a meta-data directory.
2. The enterprise portal architecture of claim 1, wherein one of said portals includes a sales portal.

3. The enterprise portal architecture of claim 1, wherein one of said portals includes an executive portal.

5 4. The enterprise portal architecture of claim 1, wherein one of said portals includes a partner portal.

5. The enterprise portal architecture of claim 1, wherein one of said portals includes a vendor portal.

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6. The enterprise portal architecture of claim 1, further including a federated knowledge directory server coupled to said portals and said knowledge framework units.

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